

of the scandalous way in which competitions are conducted, and wondering why architects can be so stupid as to spend their time and talents in such chance-work.

Well, our friend is determined, after leaving Mr. Workallnight, that he will send in for the first church that is advertised for; he does a nice set of drawings; slashing perspective, illuminated writing (which the committee cannot read), gilt frame, plate-glass, and "fair play" for his motto; thinks he must get it, but does not; the cheese-mongering committee have given the premium and job to some builder of the town, and have actually traced all his drawings, and not returned the perspective.

Never mind, I'll send in for the next, he says; this time he must get it, but no, he's done again. — and — are the lucky ones; some one has earwigged the committee, for if it had been all fair, they must have given him the premium. Well, on he goes, sending in for every thing and getting nothing, until at last he is quite sick of competitions.

Hang it, I'll set up a brass-plate he thinks; so gets himself into chambers on some second floor (for if any one comes, and will mount one flight of stairs, they would not mind another), and soon a very bright brass-plate glitters in the sun no the newly painted door. He decorates his room with rubbings of brasses, a few casts, some old chairs, and perspective views of unsuccessful competition designs for churches, lunatic asylums, and cemetery chapels; the room looks well, and highly architectural.

But what, Mr. Editor, is the use of this brass plate? people do not run after an architect as they do after a doctor: a gentleman does not run about the streets for one, or rush into a cab and tell the man to drive as quickly as possible to the nearest architect, as his house requires to be restored, or to have some Italian tower, or Gothic window, or something else erected in some part or other. What is it for? and *what is a young architect to do?* Let him go to the Royal Institute of British Architects, and see if he can get an answer from those who give advice gratis to "the junior members of the profession."

"Young man, you must not expect everything at first." "No, Sir, I do not; for if I had every thing at first I should get nothing afterwards; what I want is to get something."—"Get your friends to give you a job." "But suppose they don't choose to pull their houses down on purpose for me to put them up again, or if they would rather have nothing to do with bricks and mortar, what must I do then?"—"Try your luck again, and compete for the Army and Navy Club; there are a couple of capital premiums, and if you do not get either, why the drawings will be sure to be exhibited, and you may have your designs spoken well of in some of the papers; that will be a little consolation for you, will it not?" "To be sure it would; but I should not grow very stout upon it: do you think I should?"—"Ah, you must look at architecture not as a business, but as a fine art."

It's all very fine, "but what is a young architect to do, and how is he to get on?"

**RYDE ESPLANADE AND PIER-STREET IMPROVEMENT.**—Surveying Officers have been sent to Ryde for the purpose of inquiring into the merits of the proposed improvements there. Evidence has been laid and statements made, from which it appears that the plan has in contemplation the removal of the present unsightly houses forming the north side of Pier-street, and the formation of an esplanade at an expense of 15,413*l.*, with buildings of a regular and handsome elevation, fronting the sea, and extending from the pier to, or near to, the battery west of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club-house. The sea wall is to be faced with stone, backed with concrete, and have stone copings. It is to be in width 5 feet 6 inches at bottom, 3 feet 6 inches at top, and 14 feet above the line of the shore. The expense of filling up was estimated by Mr. Gilbert McDougall, who prepared the plans, at 9*d.* a cubic yard for 20,000 yards. Mr. Thomas Hellyer, architect and surveyor, however, did not agree with the estimates of Mr. McDougall. The filling up of 22,945 cubic yards be estimated to be requisite, at a cost of 2,390*l.* 2*s.* 1*d.*; and piles, he considered, would be essential for safety. It is also proposed to improve the drainage.

#### NEW PLOTTING SCALE.

SIR,—The circulation which your valuable publication has in almost all the engineers' and surveyors' offices, as well as in the artists' studio, and the operative's sanctum, induces me to send you a drawing of a plotting scale which I have devised, and which I think the profession will find most useful upon adoption. I will state my reasons for preferring this to the present scales.

The method of plotting the field notes from the scales now in use, I have experienced to be not only tedious and awkward, but attended with a great chance of incorrectness. They may be used with much nicety and carefulness, yet the eye cannot and will not be constantly looking at the commencement of the line to which the scale is set, to see if it has shifted itself. Shiftings accordingly often occur, and are not discovered until the offsets are laid down. The draughtsman finds that



Section of A. B.

the offsets do not cut the crossings on the base line, when he has to rub out the major part plotted. Again, the offset scale at one end is apt to slip unobserved on to the figured bevel part of the chain scale, causing it to be inclined, and in such a position the offsets are not laid down at right angles with the chain line. This observation to some, perhaps, may appear futile, but it is not so, and the practitioner will confirm what I state. Besides, the offsets ought to be laid down with as much exactness as they are taken, and indeed at times they are of more than ordinary importance, and the least inclination of the scale, especially if the offsets approach 100 links, plotted to a "three-chain scale," will throw them out of their relative position ten or fifteen links.

Further, the edges of the present scales are

not in the least protected; they get chipped, become "blind scales," and are useless.

The scale which I have devised will prevent these occurrences. The two little brass pins, one at each end of the scale, will keep it in its place. The offset scale works in a groove, and so cannot slip on to the bevel part of the chain scale, and the offsets taken on each side of the line may be plotted without moving the scale.

The divisions on the offset scale, parallel with the chain, will be found quite sufficient, and the figures being marked upon the latter perpendicularly, the same may be read off with much more ease and rapidity.

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The drawing of the scale represents it half real size. The section is of the full size.

#### THE IRON TRADE.

THE prospect of a future rise in the price of iron, with which the iron-masters have been for a long time congratulating themselves, still remains but a future prospect. Or rather, the false glitter of future gold with which it has been attempted to cajole them into an inflation of past and present prices has turned out but a will-o'-the-wisp, which they themselves have now repudiated. "The general impression amongst the great makers [at the late quarterly meetings] seemed to be, that there had been an attempt made to raise prices inconsistent with the legitimate demand for iron." And the secret of the modus operandi has come out, since it has been found that the attempt was somewhat indirect, and rather, therefore, to be repudiated than to be taken advantage of, which, no doubt, it would have been, had there been any prospect of maintaining an advance; but "it was the opinion of the meeting, that if they declared an advance, there would be a difficulty in maintaining it, exclusive of the confusion which it would cause in the trade." Therefore it was determined to sacrifice their indiscreet advocate at the Molochite (or the Mammonite) shrine of public opinion, and thus to make a virtue of necessity. Accordingly "Certain statements, which appeared in a local paper, with the evident intention of writing up high prices, were referred to at that meeting, and such attempts were very generally and very indignantly repudiated." The declarations of the heretofore oracle, therefore, were even characterized as "random assertions made by parties either reckless of the statements they publish, or misinformed on the subject on which they profess to enlighten the public." Where are we to look for that light, then, since what was once deemed a truthful leader has turned out but an *ignis fatuus*. At all events, the acknowledgment or declaration quoted in our last note on the quarterly meetings, and which has probably paved the way for the present repudiation,—that all who charge low prices are small masters,—a very ingenious one, indeed, which merited a better return from the great masters than repudiation,—leaves us, who believe a little in the converse at least of the axiom, no reliance on the dictum of the great masters at their quarterly meetings; and therefore we need not quote their prices any more unless induced by circumstances so to do. Besides, there being little or no change of previous quotations, in the meantime, there is no reason for quoting the prices of any class at present.

**MANURE COMPANIES.**—Inquiries relative to the application of the Metropolitan Sewage Manure Company for an Act of Parliament, have been referred by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests to Sir Henry T. de la Beeche and Mr. Frederick Luard Wollaston, of the Middle Temple, barrister-at-law; and similar inquiries relative to the London Sewage Chemical Manure Company, to Sir Henry de la Beeche, Mr. F. L. Wollaston, and Drs. Richard Phillips, and Lyon Playfair. The latter inquiries are to be entered on 11th February, 10 A.M., and the former on 17th February, 10 A.M., both at the Freemasons Tavern, Great Queen-street; where all interested, and any one else, may be heard, witnesses examined, plans and documents exhibited, &c.